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c. 1964/12/01

(McNaughton) ~~top secret~~ (1) TS !

Cabinet Room - ExCom (SVN)

12/1/64 (1139 AM) — President, Humphrey, M. Bundy, Taylor, Rusk, W. Bundy, RSM McC, Wheeler, JTM

Taylor: Pacification bogging down. VC activity in North SVN. Govt instability. DRV infiltration up. [Two problems: weak govt & VC strength. Won't collapse immediately, but losing game.] Papers suggest acting to boost GVN & weaken VC. [Taken from Attachment J.]

Pres: How many groups have to talk to?

T: ① Military (Khanh & senior generals – Ky + 2 or 3); ② Catholics (Arch Bish + Quinn + few). ③ Buddhists (2: Tam Chau; Tri Quang); ④ Labor (Buu, but splits)

Pres: Where are Comms? In Buddhists? [T: Reds using Bs.]

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Pres: French? [T: No monkey wrenches.]

T (continuing): ⑤ HNC. Pain in neck.

Pres: [How did Diem do it?] [T: Tight ship. No cement in the people. All factions engaging taking part. Never worked together. Need army behind govt & courageous man. Huong is courageous. Better off today than 1 mos or 2 mos ago.]

J 2b J 2a J 2c J 2d J 2e

Pres: [Most essential is a stable govt.] [Looks like Huong on newspaper in mos. Ath & if moves, get wet & sinks.] [Need to pull all groups together — put on concrete. We did in US post-assassination.] Basic to anything is stability ("You know my views of Diem. Don't want another Diem.") [How bring these people together — it takes all CIA & Rockefeller money. They do it or else.] [No point letting North if South not together.] What can we do? We thought Khanh pretty good, but gone. Diths

Huong.

T: We've warned them before.

Pres: [Why not say "this is it!"? Not send Johnson City boy out to see if they acting as they are.]

T: Maybe emphasize that our offer is for Huong govt.

Pres: Must face problem of how to keep problem from looking worse here than it is.
What resources have we? Pope? Cd he straighten it out with Catholics.

McC: Talked to Pope & Sec/State.

Pres: Anything to do with Buddhists? Econ? Social? [T: Minds of 3 or 4 people; CIA sees no way to work on them. Don't want to exile them. Know them.]

Pres: Can't we get the ambitious politicians into the act. [T: More than 100 in the cabinet. 14 (too big) now. Pretty good Vien (KH's uncle) may be white hope. He is close to Huong. He shd succeed Huong.]

Pres: Let's get Thinker to work on A B C Ds to Buddhists. How, Army? [T: Done pretty well. Will go back, as indicated.] Have we oversold them on our necessity of being power in the Pacific. "Are they drunk on Alsop."

T: Politicos tend to think VC is US problem. If Huong govt falls: ① another civilian govt ② US take over operational control, ③ mil. dictatorship, ④ Shrink our role (retreat). Mil wants increased strength.

RSM: 2-4 sqn effective strength.

Pres: Easy to get in or out. Hard to be patient. Anything more we can do to VNese, making them good Rangers. Jet plane can't interdict VC. Better guerrillas?

T: This is what we're doing in SVN. [80-100G VC (Hard Core 34,000 + Reg'l 60-80 + Part-time). Armed Forces 550,000 (200,000 regs).]

Pres: [How 34,000 like 200,000?] [T: Ratios in other areas 10:1 to 20:1 for guerrilla situations. Means 20B piastres; #175M]

RSM: Told Pres of #1.191B MAP.

Wh: Excellent program (guerrilla).

Pres: [But failed.] $ dollars, give 'em. [Not want to send Andrew Women to slap Jack Dempsey.] DRV will bomb Saigon once. Then we are off to the races. Maybe we've given them best training, so all can do is more people. [Day of reckoning coming. Want to be sure

We've done everything we can. Got to be some things still to do. What?] We could have kept them. [T: We need one. Maybe Huong + Vien together may be a Dien. May be progressing. But progress will be slow. Also [we must get Hanoi out of the business.]]

Pres: [But hadn't we better shape up before we do anything.] Also dependents should be out. [RSM: Yes.] [T: Can do on short notice. Do it when needed.]

Looked at summary of our efforts re strong desire re 3d Country help — more than Chaplain & nurse. If fails, we want them in with us. UK can't Malaysia, Germany has Berlin, Australians a "short tail kite." If as serious as believe, need new approach & get big numbers from them.

R: Will review this. UK can do more. May use Hubert.

Pres: Why not use Chinats.
Want promptly fire any leaker.

R: Combat Chinats wd merge SVN problem with whole Chinese problem. Chiang wd exploit contrary to our interests.
(McC: Can do much more.)

Pres: Can we tell them they can't exploit.
Wheeler will ask to Act North.

R: Chiang may be reluctant to make troops available

RSM: 1000 Phil, Aust & UK not make much diff militarily, but much politically.

R: Canadians on ICC & carrying burden elsewhere (Cyprus). Hit Wilson.
Germans.

RSM: Germans — unpopular domestically, oppose to image.

T: Don't need combat troops unless go North.

Pres: List from Taylor on a week of Utopian need. Then Rusk, H³ or self go get 'em. Anything out of India? Tell Bowles so. Pakistan

McC 500 Thais in Laos. (RSM: Thai should be kept in Laos.)

Pres: (A) Under present Cond'ns & (B) Anticipated conditions. Give that to who shd make request respectfully, diplomatically & get job done.

Can see forces at work, with #4B a yr, & they not doing anything.

Referred to Rusk.

Purpose of this mtg: (1) To pull stable govt together. Bell put in anything he can. Rice. Fertilizer. [Before Wheeler saddles up, try everything.] (2) After Taylor's report in wk or 10 days, pitch at 3d countries. (3) Try to get better press.

[Hesitant to sock neighbor of fever 104°

[Want to get well first.] We've never been in position ~~in position~~ to attack. Easy to sock. Easy to follow Morse. They'll be back in January. We want to be prepared to answer the questions. If need be, create a new Diem, [so when Tell Wheeler to slap we can take slap back.]

J 5a I: Doesn't that Hanoi will slap back.

J 1m Pres: Didn't MacArthur say the same.

J 1a I: [All measures mentioned needed. But not enuf. 2-3 mos, can keep this govt going, fumbling. Not much time] to get new factor in except left from hurting enemy.

?✓ J 4c Pres: Paper generally satisfactory. Never reluctant to stand up. [But must do damndest in SVN.] As many allies in as possible. J 4b Plan to get dependents out. ["Plans you've got now, all right."]

RSM: Language changes in
McC: don't expect first 30 days or Transition to produce much. Refusal important, could escalate fast.

Pres: "Policy decision that there will be reprisals but decide exactly what at the time."

Wheeler: Gave JCS view re Iraq knock.

[Pres interrupted to ask if RSM shared view that it's downhill in SVN no matter what we do in country. RSM said yes.]

Pres. ["I agree with that [start under our own volition]], but better if Allies with us, dependents out, done all we can." ["Want conditions as favorable as we can get them."]

RSM: Cited Weshy on need for base first.

Pres. We are undertaking some of this in our plan, but [want to give Taylor [one last chance, McCone (Poje), Rusk (Allies). ["] If more of the same, then I'll be talking to you, General."]

RSM: Re infiltration, let's not release them now. [Pres: & Shoot at sunrise if leak]

Pres: Max to provide Allied

Reedy: (1) Did Max vc strikes
(2) mil activity
(3) Decisions or ideas have (see Statement)
(4) Further meetings w/ Taylor (yes)

Wh/Hse statement

Pres: Shd talk to Hill [Reedy: Fel, Hick, Salt, Russell,] yes. Give good & bad; cd hope made, with 3d nations; ask for suggestions. RSM & Rusk decide re House. Mahon if here. Ford maybe

Small mtg so not want yet spread! Eyes & ears only.

Reedy: Backgdes bad. Either press org or not.

Pres: Not bad.

R: Do it pre-airport.

Pres: T touch base with Hill. Come here to say Goodbye & then see press here. "Rout 2; RSM Letts; T in 2; Lodge ? Going to do this time to time. Stick to statement & not go into ifs. No speculate. Other occasions time to time & tell when. Not to be gain from spelling ifs. Stick to announcement. More effective... Sorry built up to war.

Press at 1:30

Pres left at 1:43